

Tourism

The Township of Esquimalt, in addition to its proximity to downtown Victoria, is blessed with some unique community assets on which to grow its tourism sector.² Esquimalt has a number of visitor attractions including beautiful parks and beaches, scenic waterfront walkways, bikeway connections, walkable neighbourhoods, modern recreational facilities, CFB Esquimalt and the Naval & Military Museum.

Esquimalt is also well-positioned to take advantage of the visitor trends. Staycations account for the largest number of visitors to Greater Victoria. The origins of visitors in 2010 were: Canada (49%), USA (42.8%) and International (8.2%). Fifty-four percent of visitors came for vacation/pleasure and 25% to visit family and friends.³

The importance of tourism to the Vancouver Island economy has risen significantly over the last two decades. The regional employment rate for the accommodation and food services industry increased from 1.29% in 1995 to 8.51% by 2013, and is now higher than the provincial rate of 7.53%. Over the same period, the information, culture and recreation industry increased from 1.29% in 1995 to 4.36% in 2013.⁴

Key Facts

- In Canada, tourism was responsible for \$73.4 billion in revenues and repre-

Definitions

Tourism entails the movement, activities and expenditure of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes.¹

sented approximately 2% of Canada's overall gross domestic product (GDP).⁵

- In British Columbia, the tourism industry generated \$13.4 billion in revenue for 2011. Estimates for tourism revenue are drawn from parts of several industries, including accommodation and food services, retail services, transportation services and other services. There were approximately 18,034 tourism-related establishments operating in B.C., and tourism directly employed approximately 126,700 British Columbians (roughly 1 in 15).⁶

- In 2010, there were an estimated three million overnight visitors to the Greater Victoria area with local spending estimated to be \$315 million.⁷

Township in Focus

The Township of Esquimalt launched its tourism strategy in 2009, a year after developing an action plan to achieve the community's goal of increasing the contribution that tourism makes to the local economy.

Activities	%
Land Based Outdoor Recreation	
Walking/Hiking	72.2
Cycling	6.6
Golf	6.9
Beach or Seashore	42.3
Exploring/Touring	
Visited Parks	56.0
Historical Sites	41.3
Guided Tours	20.9
Outside Downtown	40.3
Water Based Recreation	
Fishing	6.9
Whale Watching	16.1
Kayaking/Canoeing	8.0
Diving	1.7
Cultural Activities	
Theatre/Concerts	4.9
Galleries/Exhibits	7.1
Festivals/Events	8.0
Other Arts Activities	6.3

Activities by Visitors to Greater Victoria (2010)⁸

The tourism strategy resulted in the development of the MyEsquimalt brand, website, and printed promotional material. As part of the tourism strategy seven walking tours were developed to take advantage of Esquimalt's natural and historical assets. Township walking tours are available in print at the Esquimalt Municipal Hall and online. The Township is currently in

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This is one in a series of eight backgrounder documents available for public review as part of Esquimalt's Economic Development Strategy. To provide your input, please visit our website to review information and take our online survey.

the process of developing a walking tour app.

The Township continues to promote tourism in Esquimalt through the purchase of editorial advertisements. Three times a year the Township purchases a full-page in the Times Colonist called "Experience Esquimalt" and highlights upcoming events. The Township also advertises in Coho Ferry magazine with a readership of over 100,000 travellers.

Round Table Recommendations

The Esquimalt Economic Round Table on Tourism identified the following as priority areas for action.

1. Foster Relationships with Tourism Partners

- Partner with Wilson's Transportation to provide bus tours
- Nurture relationship with Victoria Harbour Ferry
- Build partnerships with roundhouse market (Vic West), CFB Esquimalt and Songhees Wellness Centre
- Leverage resources of Tourism Victoria and Tourism BC

2. Improve Community Assets to Support Tourism

- Install public washroom at West Bay to support snorkeling and dive site (completed)
- Develop tourism opportunities at West Bay (e.g. walkway connectivity, water access, food services)
- Develop further tourism opportunities along E&N Rail Trail
- Establish an Environment Education/Management Centre
- Develop a creative 'venue' in Saxe Point Park
- Place a map of the municipality at the West Bay Kiosk
- Develop wayfinding strategy and install signage along Esquimalt Road and West Bay Walkway
- Celebrate Esquimalt's history with more interpretive signage

3. Enhance Tourism Marketing Strategy

- Include a clear focus on tourism in OCP
- Determine the Township's role in tourism promotion
- Complete a report on the 2009 Tourism Strategy successes and opportunities
- Brand Esquimalt as a green community (e.g. events, walkability, and homes)
- Encourage use of "Esquimalt" in addresses
- Promote recreational and sporting opportunities
- Host as many meetings, conference and themed festivals as possible
- Encourage the involvement of Esquimalt businesses in Attractions Victoria's "Be a Tourist in your own Hometown" program
- Set-up a seasonal tourist information office
- Have military vehicles return to participate in Bucca-ner Day Parade

4. Examine New Tourism Opportunities

- Develop partnerships with post-secondary institutions to host small conferences
- Convene a meeting to discuss the potential of attracting cruise ship tours to Esquimalt
- Create a Saturday Night Market to attract cruise ship visitors
- Investigate operation of steam train excursions with Vic West
- Develop a bus tour of Esquimalt that visits 3 to 4 points of interest
- Explore the possibility of hosting tours of CFB Esquimalt and Esquimalt Graving Dock operations
- Work with CFB Esquimalt to open museum at Work Point
- Develop partnerships with First Nations to promote cultural tours (e.g. Songhees Wellness Centre)

Sources

¹ British Columbia (2014). Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training: Tourism Strategy and Policy Branch.

² Chemistry Consulting Group and Tartan Public Relations (2008). Esquimalt Tourism Action Plan.

³ Tourism Victoria (2010). Exit Survey Report 2010.

⁴ BC Stats (2014). Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry and Development Region (to 2013).

⁵ Canada (2011). Canada's Federal Tourism Strategy: Welcoming the World.

⁶ British Columbia (2014). Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training: Tourism Strategy and Policy Branch.

⁷ Grant Thornton (2011). Tourism Victoria: Analysis of Estimated Impacts Related to Declines in Tourism Activities and Visitor Spending.

⁸ Tourism Victoria (2010). Exit Survey Report 2010.

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